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Message Text

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45
ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /031 W
---------- 122027
R 301430Z DEC 73
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5790
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
USINT CAIRO
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T JIDDA 5769

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SA
SUBJ: SAUDI FOREIGN MINISTER BELIEVES RESUMPTION OF WAR
IS NOT IMMINENT

1. SAYYID OMAR SAQQAF, SAUDI MINISTER OF STATE FOR
FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TOLD THE AMBASSADOR YESTERDAY THAT
HE HAD RECENTLY HEARD ALL MANNER OF RUMORS AND REPORTS
ABOUT THE RESUMPTION OF HOSTILITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST
WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS AND THAT SYRIA WILL BE THE CAUSE.
HE SAID HE WAS SURE THE AMERICANS HAD HEARD THE SAME
REPORTS HERE, IN CAIRO, BEIRUT AND ELSEWHERE AND
HE ASSUMED ANY INFORMATION WE HAD WAS PROMPTLY
PASSED ON TO ISRAEL.

2. BECAUSE THIS TALK WAS SO WIDESPREAD, HE SAID
HE DISCOUNTED THE POSSIBILITY COMPLETELY.

3. HE THOUGHT SYRIAN MORALE WAS HIGH AND THE
SYRIANS, EVEN MORE THAN THE EGYPTIANS AND THE
SAUDIS, WERE SCEPTICAL ABOUT THE USG'S CHANCES
OF SUCCESS IN GETTING ISRAEL TO ACCEPT A PEACE
THE ARABS COULD LIVE WITH. FOR THIS REASON, SOME
SYRIANS MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO START THE WAR AGAIN
SECRET

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WERE IT NOT FOR THE FACT THAT THEY HAD BEEN INFORMED
THEY WOULD GET NO MILITARY SUPPORT FROM ANY OF THEIR
NEIGHBORS AND NO FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM SAUDI ARABIA.

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4. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED IF IT WEREN'T POSSIBLE THAT
THE SYRIANS HOPED EGYPT AND THE OTHER ARABS WOULD BE
DRAWN, MALGRE EUX, INTO THE FIGHTING IF IT WERE RESUMED.
SAQQAF REPLIED THAT SYRIA COULDN'T AFFORD TO THAKE
THIS CHANCE.

5. SAQQAF CAUTIONED THE AMBASSADOR NOT TO CONCLUDE
FROM THIS THAT HE OR KING FAISAL THOUGHT PEACE HAD
ALREADY BEEN ACHIEVED. IF ISRAEL REFUSED TO WITHDRAW
FROM THE ARAB LANDS IT HAS OCCUPIED SINCE 1967
THERE WOULD EVENTUALLY BE ANOTHER WAR; AND IF IT
REFUSED TO START WITHDRAWAL SOON, THE WAR WOULD
NOT BE TOO FAR OFF. OF COURSE, HE ADDED, ISRAEL
COULD ALWAYS TRY A PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE AGAINST
DAMASCUS OR EVEN TRY TO OCCUPY SOUTHERN LEBANON
IN THIS CASE, THE OTHER ARABS WOULD IMMEDIATELY
COMETO THE SUPPORT OF THEIR ARAB BROTHERS.
AKINS

SECRET

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 10 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WAR, PEACE, FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973JIDDA05769
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: P750032-2340
From: JIDDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731256/abqcefjt.tel
Line Count: 75
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12-Dec-2001 by thigpegh>; APPROVED <07-Jan-2002 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SAUDI FOREIGN MINISTER BELIEVES RESUMPTION OF WAR IS NOT IMMINENT
TAGS: PFOR, XF, IS, (SAQQAF, SAYYID OMAR)
To: STATE
AMMAN
BEIRUT
CAIRO
TEL AVIV
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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